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Remarks

by

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Director of Central Intelligence

at the

Canadian Military History Exhibit

CIA Headquarters Exhibit Hall

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Thank you John.* Ambassador Burney, Mrs. Burney, Ambassador Francis, Mrs. Francis, Ambassador and Mrs. Taylor, distinguished guests. I am aware that I am standing at the junction of two corridors, one containing the exhibit that you're going to see; the other, the food and drink prepared for you. That tells me something about how long I should speak.

I'm glad that you had a chance to see the proof that here at the Agency we can do anything. We can even provide Agency bagpipers playing Canadian songs.

It isn't often that we have an opportunity to express appreciation to our friends, but today we've invited you here so that, once again, we can say thank you, Canada.

Ten years ago when our Canadian friends smuggled six Americans out of Tehran, they proved to the world that the old truths of decency and courage were still the international standard.

This exhibit came about because of what we learned from that experience. We discovered, first, that political courage need not be captive to fear or personal danger; and second, that Americans who left Tehran under Canadian cover had a lot to learn about being Canadians. One of the six rescued Americans later talked about it in this way: "It was not that the Canadians weren't good teachers. The problem was our fundamental illiteracy about Canada."

And so with this exhibit, "Courage of the Early Morning," we take a step away from illiteracy and move toward a better understanding of Canadian history and Canadian mettle. And I hope very much that this exhibit, produced by historians, will find its way into a number of other government buildings before it finishes its mission. The title of the exhibit refers to what Napoleon had termed the rarest form of bravery, the courage of the early morning. It also suggests a certain quality of resolve, a moral courage that is the singular herald of what is recounted here.

This is the resolve of Dieppe, where on August 19, 1942, Canadians mounted an assault against Hitler's "Atlantic Wall." That battle, the bloodiest in Canadian history, is recalled in an inscription addressed to the visitors to Dieppe:

"You who are alive on this beach,
remember that these men died far from home
that others, here and everywhere, might freely
enjoy life in God's mercy."

* John Helgerson, Deputy Director for Intelligence.

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This fortitude and the dedication to worldwide freedom have been the mark of Canadian resolve in both war and peace throughout this century. From the Battle of Vimy Ridge—the first Allied offensive victory of World War I, where "Canada was born"—to the peacekeeping missions of the United Nations, it has been the strength and character of the Canadian people that have assured victory.

Victor Suthren, the Director of the War Museum in Ottawa, makes the point that Canadian forces excel in peacekeeping, in "the calm defusing of tensions and animosities, the putting down of weapons, and the search for less destructive ways to resolve argument. It is," he adds, "the courage of peaceful men and women."

There is little to add to that description, except to record another of our debts to Canada—and that is the person of Sir William Stephenson. Whether as Intrepid or "The Quiet Canadian," he demonstrated courage, imagination, and resolve. I mentioned to Bill Henhoeffer, the curator of our Historical Intelligence Collection, that I have a book that perhaps belongs in this exhibit. It is the biography of our founding father, General "Wild Bill" Donovan, endorsed and presented to me by Bill Stephenson several years ago, and I think it must be one of a kind. Bill Stephenson and I were friends and we corresponded for years, and I must say that his perception and his insights, even in his older years, were formidable. When the history of this century is finally written, one of the giants will undoubtedly be Sir William Stephenson—the man who showed us the importance of intelligence in winning wars and then achieving and maintaining peace.

Ten years ago, Americans posted "Thanks, Canada" in three-foot-high letters in office windows. President Reagan gave the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor to Ambassador Kenneth Taylor, who is here today. That occasion was the first time that anyone other than a citizen of the United States had been awarded the Gold Medal of Honor. But the real gift to us had already been given—it was the strength to choose freedom, to defend principle, to show the courage of the early morning. One of our own American businessmen expressed his personal thanks for Canada's achievement, a victory for all of us. He wrote that this achievement "says a good deal about the nature of honorable men and women . . . that they don't impose national boundaries on their decency." So let this exhibit in a very small way say that we have not forgotten, and say "Thank you, Canada."

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